

The Pisa Griffin and the Mari-Cha Lion

Metalwork, Art, and Technology in the Medieval Islamicate Mediterranean

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4.5 - The Lucca Falcon

Anna Contadini

An architectural parallel to the Cathedral location of the Griffin is provided by another bronze (or more precisely copper alloy) animal, the Lucca Falcon (Fig. 1a-d) which was positioned on the apex of the roof of the Church of San Frediano in Lucca, where it was adapted to function as a weathervane (Fig. 2). Like the Griffin, it was eventually taken down, if much later, during restoration work carried out in 1954, and is now housed in the Soprintendenza di Lucca, and a copy was made. Although much smaller than the Griffin, the Lucca Falcon is still an imposing and powerful bronze that inspires awe. Originally an aquamanile, it had been transformed into a weathervane, and emitted a high-pitched sound when the wind was blowing. Its origins and history, again like those of the Griffin, have been matters of controversy: it has been dated variously from the eighth to the eleventh or early twelfth century, and its provenance has been variously supposed to be Iran, Egypt, or Spain. The Griffin was in all probability acquired by the Pisans as booty from a raid on Mallorca, and for the Falcon a Spanish background has also been suggested: its acquisition has been related to a mission to Spain in 1198, undertaken under papal order by Rainerio, a canon of San Frediano.¹

Description and technical analyses

The Falcon is a rather large (height 36.5 cm; length 34 cm; width 19 cm) and wonderful, if damaged, piece. Vidale and Ferrari's investigation (see Chapter 4.7) has revealed that a single form for the fusion was used, but with head, body and feet cast in three separate stages. The feet have three toes at the front (one is missing on the left foot) and one at the back (Fig. 3). Unlike other metal birds, for example the Cagliari peacock (discussed below), the Falcon does not have, and does not need, a stabilizing ring linking the feet at the back in order to stand securely: it is perfectly balanced (Fig. 4). It has an open beak (Fig. 5), wings that fold over at the back (Fig. 6), and the junction between the upper thighs, wings and body is sharply defined, clearly marking the anatomical articulation (Fig. 7). It has an incised decoration all over the body organized in panels: incised feathers of different types on the wings, herring-bone patterns, dotted scales and plumage on the upper part of the legs (Fig. 8); and plumage on the neck (Fig. 9). On the chest there is a decoration of five-lobed elements, probably derivative of vine scrolls with five leaves that have a dot in the middle (Fig. 10), that surrounds, in the middle of the chest, a large roundel in the shape of a twelve-petalled flower (Fig. 11). This is all surmounted by an inscription between twin bands at both top and bottom that provides a transition between the neck and the chest (Figs. 11 and 21a).

Research has been carried out recently on the metallurgy of the Falcon by Palleschi (see Lorenzetti, Grifoni, Legnaioli, Pagnotta and Palleschi, Chapter 4.6). The readings are qualitatively similar to those for the Griffin, confirming that the Falcon too, as Peter Northover had already suggested, is probably made of a leaded gunmetal similar to that of the Pisa Griffin.



As far as composition is concerned, it belongs to the group discussed by Ponting (see Chapter 2.4) that makes up the majority of copper-alloy metalwork in the Islamicate Mediterranean during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

With regards to the types of decoration, Vidale and Ferrari's (see Chapter 4.7) examination has highlighted that, just as with the Griffin, the incisions seem to have been made by chisels, rather than bulins, producing marks on the metal when hammered. The linear decorations would result from successive blows to a chisel with presumably a straight head that, when positioned diagonally, would also produce an impression resembling an elongated droplet. At least two other types of chisel or small punch have also been identified, one hemispherical, the other circular in form. A further feature that seemingly associates the Falcon to the Griffin is the presence of variations in degrees of definition of the worked areas relative to their greater or lesser visibility. In particular, the small circles and fine lines that define the feathers tend to disappear beneath the belly, reinforcing the connections with the Griffin. Both the metallurgical and decorative technical commonalities with the Griffin reinforce the likelihood of a similar provenance and date.

Previous page:

1. Lucca Falcon. Spain (?), late eleventh century (?) Lucca, San Frediano
(Photos: CNR, Pisa)



2. Church of San Frediano at Lucca
(Photo: Anna Contadini)

3. Feet of the Lucca Falcon
(Photo: CNR, Pisa)





4. Group investigating the Lucca Falcon in the Soprintendenza in Lucca. The photo shows the scale of the object and how it stands perfectly balanced



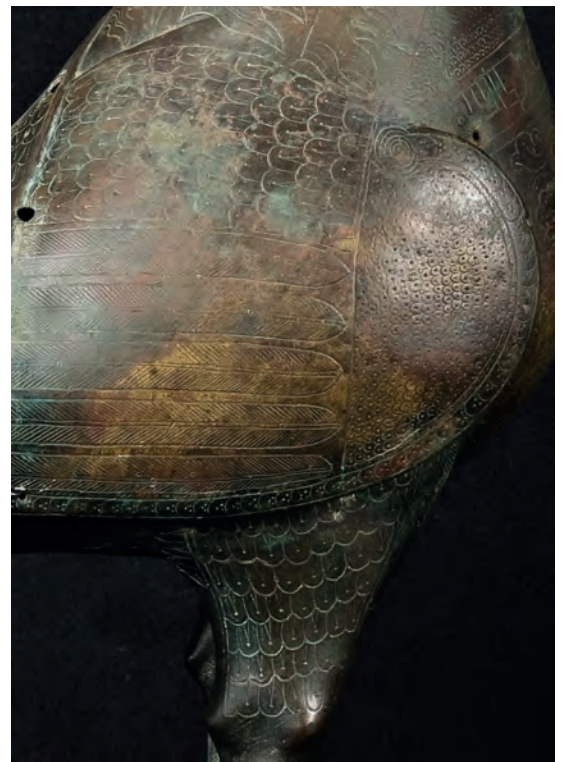
5. Head and beak of the Lucca Falcon
(Photo: Anna Contadini)

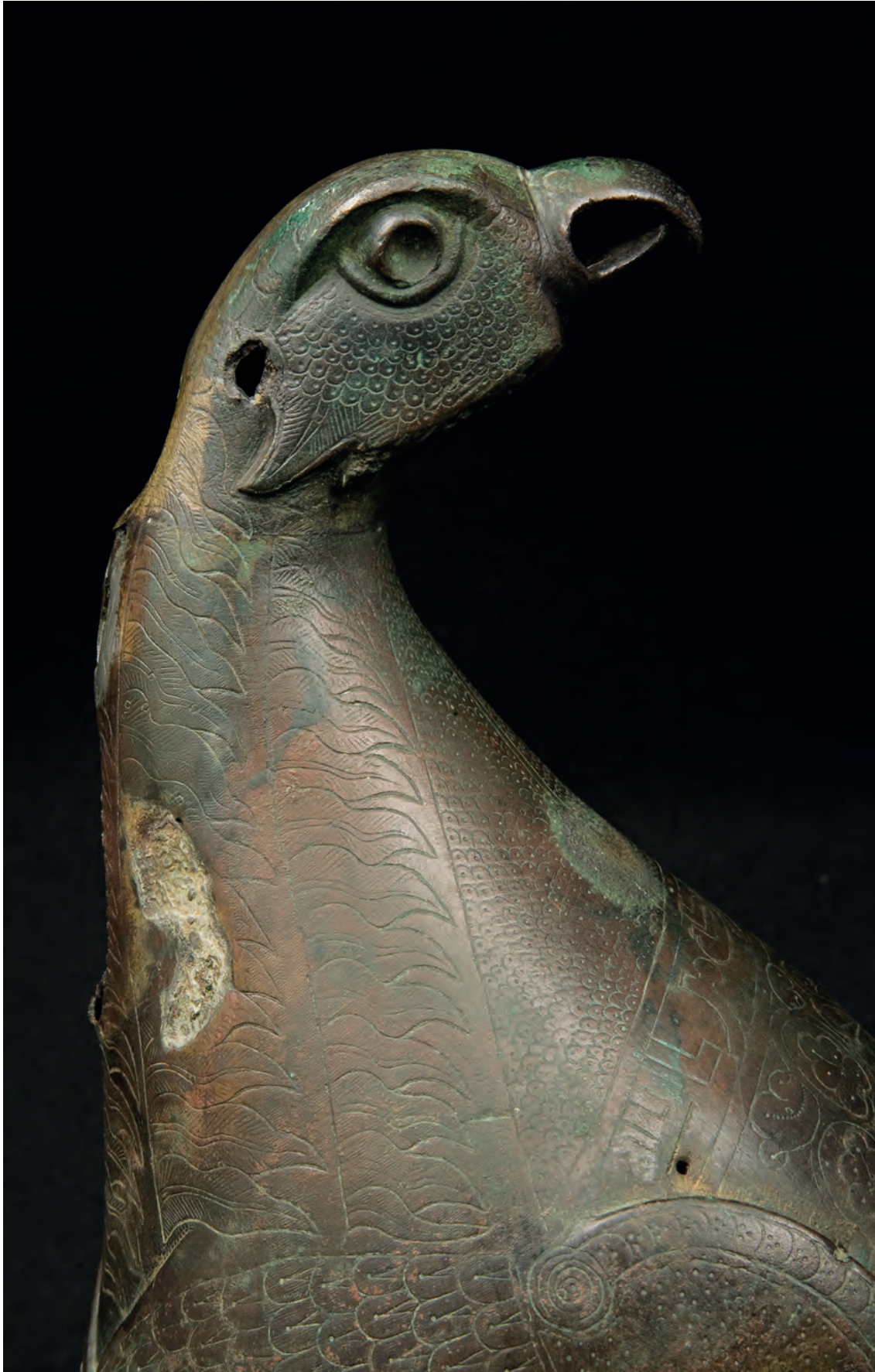
6. Wings of the Lucca Falcon
(Photo: Anna Contadini)



7. Junction between the wing and body of the Lucca Falcon
(Photo: Anna Contadini)

8. Incised feathers of different types on the wings, herringbone patterns, dotted scales and plumage on the upper part of the legs
(Photo: CNR, Pisa)





9. Plumage on the neck of the
Lucca Falcon
(Photo: CNR, Pisa)

10. Decoration on the chest of
the Lucca Falcon
(Photo: Anna Contadini)



Transformation

Subsequent damage apart, the Griffin was left unaltered after acquisition, and here the fortunes of the two diverge, for the damage to the Falcon was inflicted deliberately as part of the spectacular process of transformation to which it was subjected. Figure 1d shows the disruption caused² that created holes on its body: one on the back of the head, which was the entry point for a funnel; two parallel holes on the back of the neck and one on the upper wing result from the removal of its handle (originally fixed in two points, as in the Sinai falcon, see below) during the process of giving the Falcon a completely new identity and function.

Presumably undertaken during the thirteenth or fourteenth century, this radical and quite extraordinary transformation resulted in a wholly new appearance, almost as if the Falcon had been invited to a fancy-dress party, for in the course of being converted into a weathervane it was also changed into a cockerel. Its body was covered by a 'coat' (Fig. 12) made, as recent examination has confirmed, of a sheet of copper, 1mm thick, with mercury gilding.³ The various components that made up the 'coat', two of which have been lost, were fixed with small metal nails. The remaining ones (see Bassi and Garzella, Chapter 4.8, Fig. 1), consist of: the upper part of the right wing; a part of the back; the neck; the breast; the upper left leg; and the lower part of the wings and tail. Missing are the upper right leg and a covering for the upper part of the tail, which must have been present as there is a nail hole to fix it (Figs. 2 and 3 in Bassi and Garzella, Chapter 4.8). Two further elements were added to complete the transformation, a 'helmet' over its head (Fig. 13), fitted with a cockscomb at the back and a funnel-shaped sheath over the beak at the front; and a broad-bladed cock's tail mounted upon its back (Fig. 14). This was designed



11. Chest of the Lucca Falcon
with twelve-petalled flower
and inscription
(Photo: CNR, Pisa)

12. Lucca Falcon (copy)
transformed into a
weathercock, thirteenth or
fourteenth century. Lucca, San
Frediano (After Del Grosso,
"Rivestimento," 196)



to catch the wind and ensure rotation. Two large round holes, vertically aligned, were created in the upper back and towards the front of the belly to allow the insertion of a pole around which this new weathervane-cockerel would turn (Fig. 1d and Fig. 15). All these additional elements, coat, helmet and tail, have been replicated on the replacement copy, thereby preserving the external transformation to which the Falcon was subjected (Fig. 16).



What is not replicated in the copy is yet another hole, in the belly near the tail (Fig. 30a). Although its purpose has not been definitively accounted for, it may well have been for the extraction of the core following casting (see below), and, being recessed, it could have been worked for a plate, now lost, to be fitted as a seal. A quite different property was that when the Falcon was installed on the roof and exposed to the wind it would allow access to the air to reverberate within the hollow body, and advantage was taken of this by encasing the open beak in a short funnel-like tube that would direct the sound.⁴ What is certain is that, like the Griffin, the Falcon did indeed produce noise when on the roof, depending on the strength of the wind: we are told by people who still remember the time before it was taken down in 1954 that it emitted a high-pitched whistle.⁵ Lacking this hole in the belly, the replacement copy is unfortunately unable to reproduce such a sound experience.

13. 'Helmet' of the Lucca Falcon (After Del Grosso, "Rivestimento," 197)

Function and affiliations

Originally the Falcon was an aquamanile, and not an incense burner, as has been suggested. As is the case with the almost identical Sinai falcon⁶ (see Ballian, Chapter 4.4) (Figs. 17a and b), one of the holes in the head must have served originally to house the funnel through which the water would have been poured in (Figs. 28a and b). The two have



14. 'Coat' with a broad-bladed
cock's tail
(After Silva, *La Basilica*, fig. 77)

usually been considered to form a group that also includes two other extant aquamanilia, one in Berlin, the other in St. Petersburg, but, as pointed out by Anna Ballian, a fifth piece could be added, the cockerel of the monastery of the Great Lavra, also positioned on the top of a Church (see Ballian, Chapter 4.4). In addition, connections could also be explored with aquamanilia in the form of a peacock, one in the Louvre, the others at Cagliari and Vaduz.⁷ That at Vaduz, Furusiyya Art Foundation, is attributed to Cordoba, tenth-eleventh century, and is very similar to the Cagliari peacock in both form and decoration (see below). There is also an acquamanile in the Khalili Collection in the form of a goose, signed by a Herati craftsman, Abu'l-Qasim Ibn Muhammad al-Harawi, and attributed to Khurasan, twelfth century, which is typologically somewhat similar to the Cagliari peacock, but very distant in decoration.⁸



15. Holes in the upper back and belly of the Lucca Falcon made to insert a pole around which the new weathercock would revolve
(Photo: Anna Contadini)

Related pieces and Inscriptions

The notion of a cohesive group needs, though, to be set aside, as these various pieces do not all originate from the same area and range widely in date. Of the presumed group of four I would suggest that the bird of prey in Berlin (Fig. 18)⁹ is Umayyad, possibly eighth century, as it has the same approach to incised decoration on the body as the Marwan ewer (Fig. 19), with its whole surface covered by volutes and arch-like decorations derived from classical sources.¹⁰ It is further differentiated by not having an inscription. Another of the four, the bird of prey in the Hermitage in St Petersburg, is Abbasid, having an inscription around the neck in angular (*kufic*) script that gives the date H. 180 / AD 796-7 (Fig. 21). It is of bronze or copper alloy with traces of silver and copper inlay, which would make it, as Ivanov has argued, an Iraqi piece.¹¹ The Great Lavra cockerel is significantly later, probably dating, following Ballian, from the tenth century.

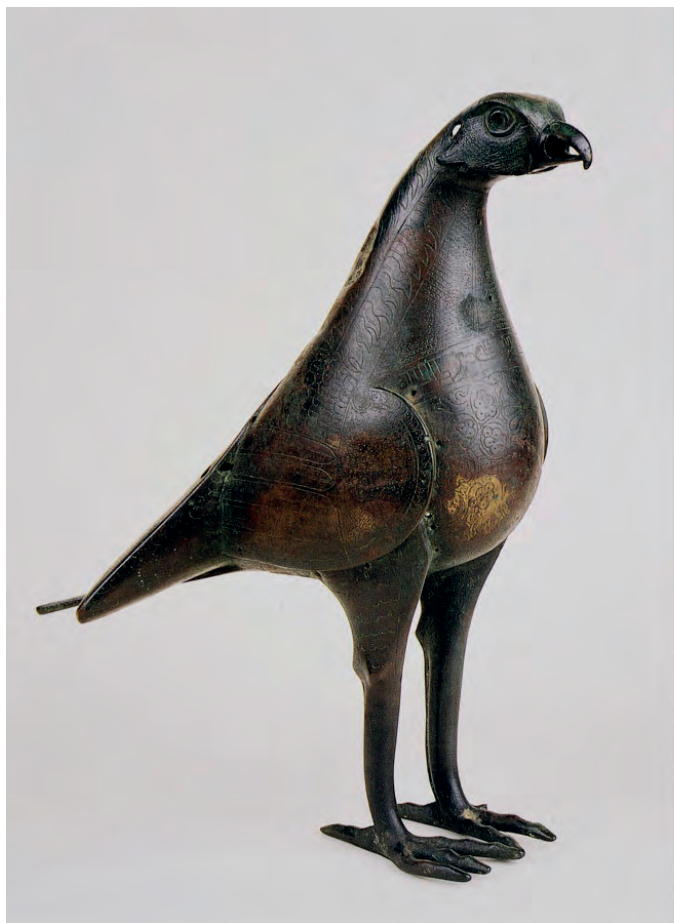
Unlike the inscription on the Hermitage bird, those on the Lucca Falcon and the Sinai falcon are not documentary and do not provide dates. Both contain the benedictory formula *bismillāh baraka min Allāh* (“in the name of God, blessing from God”),

بسم الله بركة من الله

to which the Sinai bird adds *li-ṣāhibihi* (“to its owner”),¹² taking advantage of the greater space provided by the lower position of its inscription across the widest part of the chest. Both inscriptions are, though, in an almost identical angular (*kufic*) script

16. Lucca Falcon as weathercock
on a gilded globe inserted in the
pole of a cross
(After Silva, *La Basilica*, fig. 79)





(Figs. 22a and b), potentially, therefore, indicating a proximate date. It is a script that may be related to early material, although less to early manuscripts of the Qur'an, whose various styles of angular script do not really come close to that of our two birds,¹³ than to the inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock (dated to 72/691-2) and the Hermitage bird (dated to 180/796-97), which provide closer comparisons. However, it needs to be borne in mind that archaizing script styles may be used to give prestige to an object, a feature well known in manuscripts at least as late as the fourteenth century in the Arab-speaking world and much later in Iran. Thus although the script of the text maybe in *naskh* or *nasta'liq*, the titles or other relevant rubrics are often in various types of angular, *kufic* script. The fact that one can find similar, if not identical, angular scripts over the span of a century (from the Dome of the Rock to the Hermitage bird), together with the fact that 'early' scripts may often be used for aesthetic and prestigious purposes demonstrates that epigraphic styles can continue over long periods. It would, in consequence, be rash to assign a date to the Lucca Falcon (which in this case would be very early) on the basis of the style of its inscription.

The danger of doing so is underlined by the evidence of the peacock aquamanile in the Louvre (Fig. 23),¹⁴ which has two inscriptions incised on the chest, one in Latin and one in Arabic. The latter is again in a rather archaic angular script which could be used to support the notion of an early date, whereas the Latin one is in a distinctive script that has been identified as used in Spain in the Middle Ages, and has been interpreted

17. a) Lucca Falcon; b) Sinai bird, Egypt, late tenth-early eleventh century. Mount Sinai, Egypt, Saint Catherine's monastery (Photos: a: After Burrese and Caleca, *Arte Islamica*, fig. on 25; b: Courtesy of Father Justin)

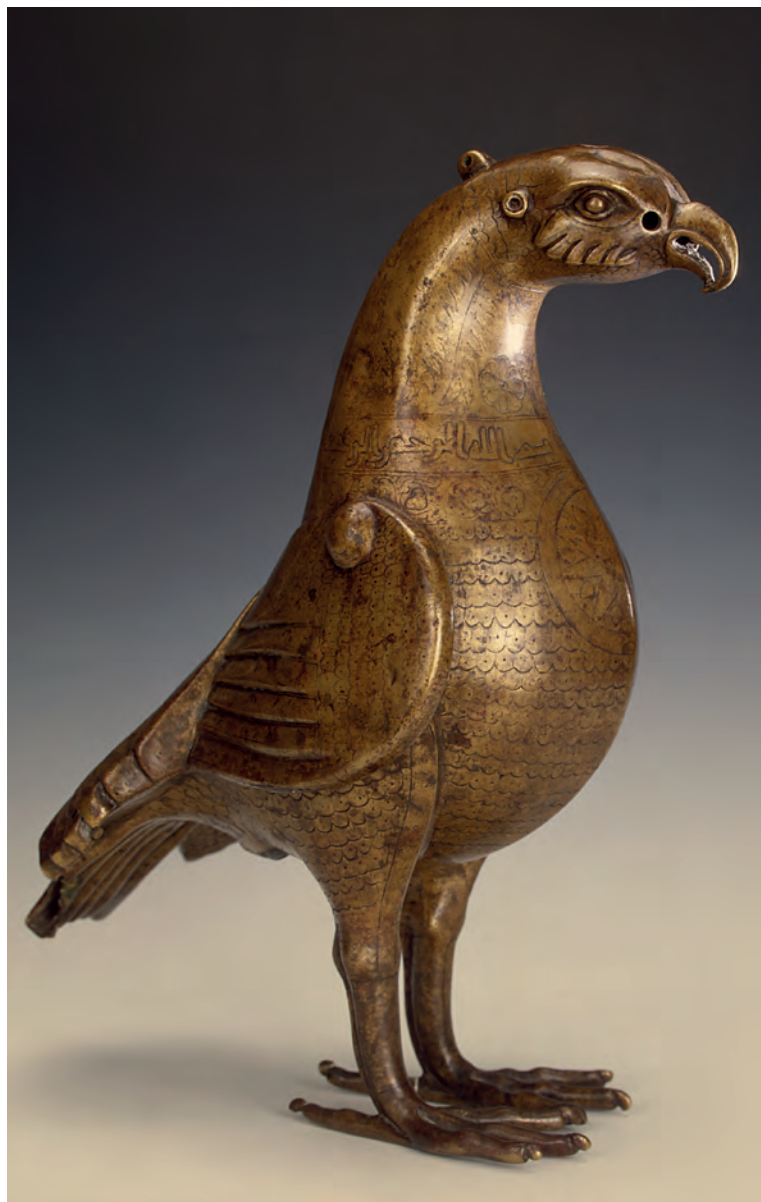
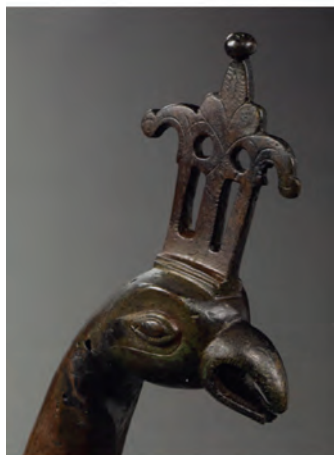
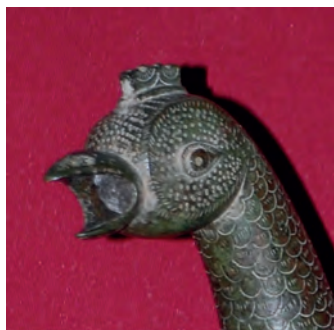


18. Berlin eagle. Syria or Iraq, eighth century. Berlin, Museum of Islamic Art, inv. no. I.5623
(Photo: Courtesy of Berlin Museum of Islamic Art)



19. Marwan ewer. Probably Syria, late eighth - early ninth century. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art, inv. no. 9281 (After Ballian, "The 'Marwan Ewer,'" 236)

as indicating a late tenth-century date. It may be read as + *opus salomonis erat* x ("this is the work of Solomon"), but the sense has been a matter of some dispute. The incised cross before and the x after could be taken either as two different types of cross or as two elements that define the beginning and the end of the inscription. Bautier, though, interprets the final T of *ERAT* and what appears to be an X immediately after as belonging together, so that *ERA* (period of time) + *TX* gives, according to a Spanish calendar, the date 972.¹⁵ Grabar does not consider the sign after *ERAT* as an X, as this was not clearly visible to him, and considers the T only as a date, corresponding to 962, and thinks that this is the date that should be assigned to the piece.¹⁶ However, more recent investigation carried out at the Louvre has established that it is indeed an X.¹⁷ The inscription in Arabic, *'amal 'abd al-malik al-naṣrānī*, could be taken with the Latin one to form a single bilingual inscription¹⁸ that could be read as "this is the work of Solomon, the work of the servant of the Christian king", with *salomonis* presumably standing for the Arabic Sulayman. Alternatively, one could read them as separate inscriptions: "this is the work of Solomon" and "the work of the servant of the Christian king".¹⁹ Such bilingual inscriptions can "speak" to two different communities, in this case Christian and Muslim, although Bautier has suggested that the Arabic inscription too is directed to a Christian community, and that *'abd al-malik* is a calque of *servus Dei*, thus yielding "the work



20. Heads of: a) Cagliari peacock. Spain, eleventh-twelfth century; b) Louvre peacock. Spain, probably Cordoba, 972; c) Furusiyya peacock. Spain, eleventh-twelfth century. Vaduz, Furusiyya Art Foundation (Photos: a: Damiano Anedda; b: After Makariou, *Islamic Art*, 95; c: After López and Vallejo, *El esplendor*, 48)

21. Hermitage eagle. Iraq, 180/796-97. St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, inv. no. IR-1567 (Photo: State Hermitage Museum)

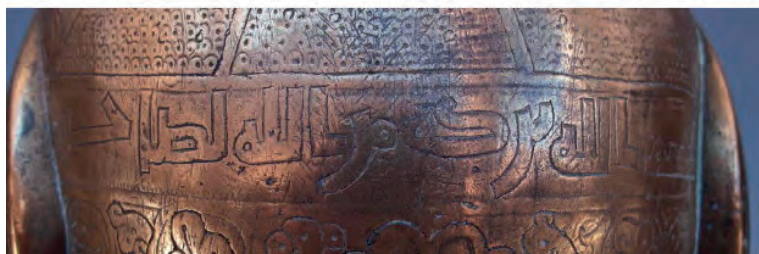
of the Christian servant of the Lord".²⁰ Further, it is possible that in this context *opus salomonis* does not identify the maker but, as with other pieces, especially metalwork, qualifies the object as one of outstanding craftsmanship. The name Sulayman on the Abbasid bird in the Hermitage and on a bronze lamp in Spain (Fig. 24)²¹ may be similarly interpreted.²²

Christian references are also to be found on the Cagliari peacock.²³ This lacks an inscription but has two clipeate crosses incised just above the belly within a circle formed by curly feathers and on a background of dots, and another such cross, this time on a plain background, at the back of the handle (Figs. 25a and b). In terms of morphology, the Cagliari peacock is closely related to those in the Louvre²⁴ and Furusiyya Art Collection, and also to the aquamanile in form of a ewer but with ornithological/peacock features of the spout and handle, presently in the David Collection in Copenhagen (Fig. 26).²⁵ All four have the same stylization of eyes, beak, crest and the same sense of rigidity and monumentality.²⁶ In particular,

22. Inscription on: a) Lucca Falcon; b) Sinai bird (Photos: a: CNR, Pisa; b: Courtesy of Father Justin)



23. Peacock aquamanile (detail). Spain, probably Cordoba, 972. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. MR 1569 (After Makariou, *Islamic Art*, 94)



Next page:

24. Bronze lamp. Spain, tenth century. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional (MAN), inv. no. 50857 (Photos: Patricia Elena Suárez. CER.es, MECD)







25. Cagliari peacock. Bronze. Spain, eleventh-twelfth century. Cagliari, Pinacoteca Nazionale, inv. no. 1445 (Photos: Damiano Anedda)

that in Furusiyya Art Collection has very strong similarities with the Cagliari peacock in both form and decoration (Fig. 20c).²⁷

Like the Louvre peacock, that in Cagliari has an open beak, and although the crest is unfortunately broken (Fig. 20a) it is clear from what remains that it was fashioned in two sections with a bar in the middle, again as in the Louvre peacock (Fig. 23). These typological resemblances could have been even stronger had the tail survived, for in the Cagliari peacock there remains an attachment that indicates that it would have had the same type of broad, flat and presumably also roundish tail. In both birds the feet are linked by a flat ring at the back, in the shape of a horseshoe, that provides stability,²⁸ and in the Cagliari peacock, there is in addition a pin from the tail to the back of the ring. While the Lucca Falcon presents no sign of such a device, the Sinai falcon also has a pin, this time attached to the lower side of the tail and running to the ground, although it is difficult to say whether it is original (Fig. 17b).

Beyond the group, connections may be noted between the vegetal motifs and arabesque motifs engraved respectively on the breast and wings of the Cagliari peacock and the embossed palmettes on the tenth century casket of the Spanish caliph Hisham II (Fig. 27).²⁹ In addition, with regard to sculptural elements one can point to similarities between the Lucca Falcon and the Griffin in the stylization of eyes and beak and in the rigid, monumental stance.



26. Ewer. Spain, late tenth-early eleventh century. Copenhagen, David Collection, inv. no. 5/1990. (After Dodds, *Al-Andalus*, 215, cat. 14)

Provenance and period

These various connections have implications for provenance and date, providing a framework within which one may attempt to locate the Lucca Falcon. If we follow Bautier, the Spanish dating system used on the bronze lamp in the MAN and on the Louvre peacock indicates that these pieces were made in Spain, I would suggest probably Cordoba, where important metal pieces were fashioned at the time. Similarly, if the Griffin and the Hisham II casket are Spanish, so too, in all probability, is the Cagliari peacock (see Anedda, Chapter 4.1). The design feature of the five-petalled palmettes on the chest of the Lucca Falcon, with

dots in them, probably derive from the classical vine leaf motif, and in the more stylized form they assume here are generally typical of tenth to twelfth-century Middle Eastern art: they are found in Umayyad art, on Fatimid material, and on Spanish material of the twelfth century (Figs. 28 and 29).³⁰ Indicative are also certain features of the decoration that are relatable to the Griffin, especially the way that some of the plumage is rendered (for example see the details of small feathers on the Falcon's head compared with those of the head of the Griffin; Figs. 30a and b), while both and also the Monzon lion³¹ have similarly sculpted eyes and protruding circles to define the space of the head. These features reinforce the likelihood that the Lucca Falcon is of Spanish origin.

The piece with which the Falcon is most obviously and closely connected is, however, the Sinai falcon (Fig. 17b). While the Lucca Falcon has lost its handle and funnel during the transformation process, the Sinai bird retains both, the handle being in the shape of a stretched animal, probably a dog or jackal,³² holding a small ball in its mouth (Figs. 30a and b). A close relationship between them is nevertheless established by features of size and design: they are both ca. H. 36.5 cm; L. 34 cm; W. 19 cm, and have very similar bellies and feet,³³ very similar decoration, including the five-petalled palmette (Fig. 32), very similar heads and plumage decoration, and inscriptions in exactly the same style of script (Figs. 22a and b). Both have a similarly shaped opening in the belly, which in the Falcon is recessed as if to accommodate a stopper (Figs. 33a and b); but given that there are no stoppers extant that can be associated with them, and no trace of a hinge, the question arises of its function if they were used as aquamanilia. In the Western tradition, aquamanilia generally have at least one aperture and sometimes two, either in the belly or in the chest, and they seem to have been used for the extraction of the core following casting, after which they were plugged. It may well be that a similar casting technique was used for the Lucca and Sinai birds. The inlet for the water, which is usually covered by a hinged lid, now frequently missing, is generally on the top of the head, but it depends very much on the type of animal involved. The dragon aquamanile of the twelfth century, for example, such as that in the V&A,³⁴ has the water inlet in the tail, while the Lucca and Sinai birds have it in the head. In the Lucca Falcon, the funnel with its lid was removed, and in addition to being further differentiated from the Sinai falcon during the course of the process of transformation into a weathervane through the loss of the handle, most of the feather-like elements hanging from the sides of the cheeks (perfectly visible on the Sinai bird) were filed off (Figs. 34a, b, c). The two birds are nevertheless almost identical, and were probably made in the same workshop by the same craftsmen. But the location of that workshop is still uncertain. For the Sinai bird Ballian suggests an Egyptian origin and a date towards the late tenth - early eleventh century and argues that this could be the case also for the Lucca Falcon and the Lavra cockerel. For the Lucca Falcon, an Iranian provenance has been suggested,³⁵ while Rachel Ward hypothesized an Egyptian or Iraqi provenance and a date to the ninth century.³⁶ In contrast, Silva suggests that although the Lucca Falcon may be of Iranian inspiration, it is most probably of Spanish manufacture because of both stylistic links to Spanish metalwork and the connection with Rainerio.³⁷ Given the lack of more compelling evidence, the connections made above with the broader Western Mediterranean and more specifically Spain suggest that a Spanish provenance is likely.



As far as date is concerned we have the context of a possibly eighth-century Umayyad piece in Berlin; the Hermitage bird of 796-7; the Spanish lamp of 962; the Louvre peacock of 972; the Sinai falcon, that Ballian dates to late tenth or early eleventh century; the Cagliari peacock, that Anedda dates to the late tenth or early eleventh century, but could also be datable to the eleventh or early twelfth century;³⁸ the Griffin of the eleventh to early twelfth century (and more precisely probably a date between 1085 and 1110 (see Contadini, Chapter 3.3). The date of the Lucca Falcon is likely to be later than the Berlin, Hermitage and Louvre

27. Casket of Hisham II. Spain, Madinat al-Zahra'-Cordoba, between 971-976. Tesoro de la Catedral de Gerona. inv. no. 64 (Photo: Jesús Serrano)



28. Lustre painted dish showing the five-petalled palmettes. Spain, mid-twelfth - early thirteenth century. Pisa, Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, inv. 190 (After Lintz *et al.*, *Le Maroc médiéval*, 420, no. 256)

29. Detail of metal casket showing the five-petalled palmettes. Spain, fourteenth century. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 51051 (Photo: Mirco Bassi)



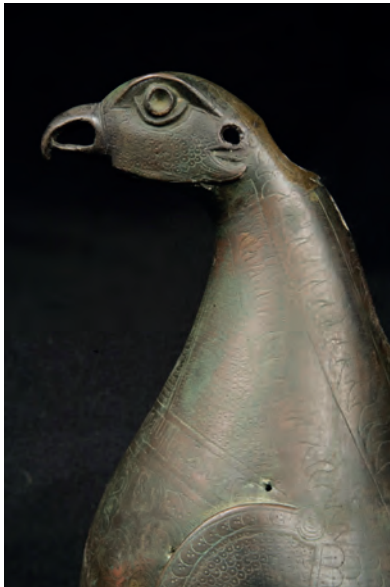
birds for the stylistic reasons mentioned above. If we take into consideration the metallurgical analyses (referred to at the beginning of this article); stylistic similarities (although these are somewhat imprecise guides); and the Rainerio connection we may conclude that not only the Lucca Falcon is of Spanish origin, probably again Cordoba, but that it is likely to be closer in date to the Pisa Griffin, late eleventh century.

Transculturation

Despite the difference in size, there is an obvious parallel between the Lucca Falcon and the Pisa Griffin in the final position to which they were assigned. The striking similarity of the architectural gesture is in each case combined with a functional reassignment and symbolic revaluation, a partially convergent process of change beginning from very different starting points, for whereas the Griffin may be related to the automata, the Falcon was designed as an aquamanile. Both, then, were wrenched from their original settings and functions but, in addition, unlike the Griffin, the Falcon was also forced to suffer the imposition of a radical transformation, carried out most probably in the thirteenth or early fourteenth century,³⁹ one that was conscious and by no means random. In the medieval Islamic tradition the falcon is a symbol of power and protection, and in the books of animals it is described as a bird of prey that is also very sociable and possesses great sagacity, so much so that it is considered the king of the birds of prey (Fig. 35).⁴⁰ All this was lost when the Falcon was projected into a tradition of weathervanes in cockerel form. It is one that goes



30. Head of: a) Lucca Falcon; b) Pisa Griffin, both showing details of plumage (Photos: Anna Contadini)



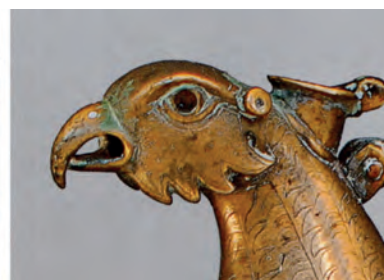
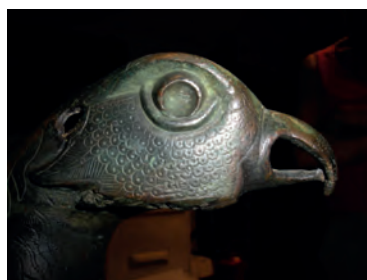
31. Head of: a) Lucca Falcon; b) Sinai bird (Photos: a: CNR, Pisa; b: Courtesy of Father Justin)



32. Decoration on the Sinai Bird showing the five-petalled palmettes (Photo: Courtesy of Father Justin)

33. Belly of the a) Lucca Falcon; b) Sinai bird
(Photos: a: CNR, Pisa; b: Courtesy of Father Justin)

34. Head of: a and b) Lucca Falcon after the feather-like elements hanging from the sides of the cheeks have been filed off; c) Sinai bird
(Photos: a and b: Anna Contadini; b: Courtesy of Father Justin)



back at least to a weathervane on a bell tower of St. Peter's in Rome dating to 752–57 (Fig. 36),⁴¹ and that such weathervanes continued to be placed on top of churches in the West is confirmed by an eleventh-century painting (Fig. 37) from the Ecclesia scroll of Gaeta, southern Italy.⁴² A beautiful falcon with an Islamic inscription was thus transformed into an explicitly Christian symbol, one that referenced the Gospel story of Saint Peter, who denied Christ three times as the cock crowed, and at the same time served as a reminder, as it turned in the wind, of human inconstancy.



35. Falcon (*buzāh*). Ibn Bakhtishu', *Kitāb na't al-ḥayawān* (Book on the Characteristics of Animals). Probably Baghdad, datable to 1225. London, British Library, Or. 2784, fol. 170v (29v) (Photo: © The British Library)

36. Gilded bronze weathercock once on a bell tower of the old church of Saint Peter, Rome, eighth century. Rome, Vatican Treasury
(Photo: After Silva, *La Basilica*, fig. 78)



37. Mater Ecclesiae, Exultet, Gaeta, eleventh century. Gaeta, Museo Diocesano, Exultet 1 (After Cavallo, *Exultet*, 345)



Notes

- 1 A. Pellegrini, "Le crociate in Terrasanta e la parte che vi ebbero i Lucchesi (1095-1278)," *Studi e documenti di storia e diritto* XIX (1898): 386-389; Romano Silva, *La Basilica di San Frediano a Lucca: Immagine Simbolica di Roma Cristiana* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2010), 224; A. Del Grosso, "Rivestimento in forma di gallo," in *Lucca e l'Europa. Un'idea di medioevo (V-XI secolo)*, exh. cat. Lucca, 25 September 2010 - 9 January 2011, ed. C. Baracchini *et al.* (Lucca: Fondazione Ragghianti Studi sull'arte, 2010), 196-197, no. 90.
- 2 The Falcon has also now been scanned in 3D (see Scopigno, Chapter 2.7), which is useful for looking at details of both damage and elements of the decoration.
- 3 I am very grateful to the late Romano Silva for discussing this piece with me and explaining that the 'coat' of gilded copper is formed by several pieces of a (relatively) thin sheet of copper gilded with an amalgam of gold and mercury which were secured over the body of the falcon by a number of small nails. See Silva, *La Basilica*, 223-226; see also Del Grosso, "Rivestimento"; Anna Contadini, "Translocation and Transformation: Some Middle Eastern Objects in Europe," in *The Power of Things and the Flow of Cultural Transformations: Art and Culture between Europe and Asia*, ed. Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch and Anja Eisenbeiß (Berlin, Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010), 55-57. Direct investigations took place in May 2010 when Peter Northover, Gabriella Garzella and myself were able to study the piece in detail: thanks to Maria Teresa Filieri for facilitating our study. Further technical investigations by Massimo Vidale, Stefano Ferrari, Mirco Bassi and Gabriella Garzella confirm and expand on what is reported here: see Vidale and Ferrari, Chapter 4.7 and Bassi and Garzella, Chapter 4.8. XRF analyses and 3D scanning were also carried out by Palleschi and by Roberto Scopigno and the CNR of Pisa respectively (see Lorenzetti, Grifoni, Legnaioli, Pagnotta and Palleschi, Chapter 4.6 and Callieri, Scopigno and Dellepiane, Chapter 2.7).
- 4 That the hole may not be original was commented upon by Peter Northover while we were examining the object. Scerrato, among others, suggested a function as incense burner: Francesco Gabrieli and Umberto Scerrato, *Gli Arabi in Italia: Cultura, contatti, e tradizioni* (Milan: Garzanti-Schewiller, 1979), 491, no. 530.
- 5 Scerrato in *Gli Arabi*, 491, no. 530 reports that when the wind was blowing he himself heard that the falcon emitted a high-pitched whistle.
- 6 Now in the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt. Anna Ballian, "Bird-Shaped Vessel," in *Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition, 7th-9th Century*, ed. Helen C. Evans with Brandie Ratliff (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012), 64-66, cat. 38.
- 7 For *acquamanili* in the Christian liturgy and for the peacock in Cagliari see Damiano Anedda and Andrea Pala, "Acquamanili nella liturgia cristiana (IV-XVI secolo): il bronzo della Pinacoteca Nazionale di Cagliari," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 44, no. 2 (2014): 689-731.
- 8 Khalili Collection, MTW 846. See J. M. Rogers, ed., *The Arts of Islam. Treasures from the Nasser D Khalili Collection* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007), 79, cat. 68.
- 9 Berlin, Museum of Islamic Art, inv. no. I.5623. Volkmar Enderlein *et al.*, *Museum für islamische Kunst: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2001), 27-28.
- 10 Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art, inv. no. 9281. See Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture 650-1250* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2001), 62-63; Anna Ballian, "The 'Marwan Ewer'," in *Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition, 7th-9th Century*, ed. Helen C. Evans with Brandie Ratliff (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012), 235, cat. 171.
- 11 Hermitage Museum, inv. no. Isl 371. Anatoly Ivanov, ed., *Masterpieces of Islamic Art in The Hermitage Museum* (Kuwait: Dār al-Āthār al-Islāmiyya, 1990), 20-21, no. 1). The inscription says *bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm baraka min allāh mim mā 'amal sulaymān bi-madīna ... sanat thamān wa mi'a*. The reading of the town where the piece was made is unclear and disputed. However, an Iraqi provenance is now accepted.
- 12 For a classification of types of inscriptions on object see Anna Contadini, "Text and Image on Middle Eastern Objects: The Palmer Cup in Context," in *A Rothschild Renaissance: A New Look at the Waddesdon Bequest in the British Museum*, ed. Pippa Shirley and Dora Thornton (London: British Museum Research Publications 212, 2017), 122-143: 122-123.
- 13 François Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition: Qur'ans of the 8th to 10th Centuries* (London: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992).
- 14 Inv. no. MR 1569. Sophie Makariou, "Aquamanile en forme de paon," in *Les Andalousies de Damas à Cordoue*, exh. cat., Paris, Institut du Monde Arabe, ed. Marthe Bernus-Taylor and Éric Delpont (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 2000), 111, cat. 87; Sophie Makariou, "Peacock of 'Abd al-Malik the Christian," in *Islamic Art at the Musée du Louvre*, ed. Sophie Makariou (Paris: Hazan, Musée du Louvre, 2012), 93-96.
- 15 This interpretation was put forward by Robert Henri Bautier, "Datation et provenance du 'paon aquamanile' du Louvre à l'inscription bilingue, latine et arabe," *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1977): 92-101. According to a calendar used only in Spain until the middle of the twelfth century the T would correspond to 1000 and the X to 10, counting, according to Grabar see note below, from the conquest of central Spain by the Romans in 38 BC. This would correspond to 972 AD.
- 16 Oleg Grabar, "About a Bronze Bird," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, ed. Elizabeth Sears and Thelma K. Thomas (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 117-125.
- 17 Makariou, "Peacock of 'Abd al-Malik."
- 18 Anna Contadini, "Acquamanile in forma di uccello," in *Eredità dell'Islam. Arte islamica in Italia*, exh. cat., Venice, Palazzo Ducale, 30 October 1993 - 30 April 1994, ed. Giovanni Curatola (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale), 125-126, cat. 42.
- 19 The Arabic can also be construed as meaning "the work of the Christian servant of the king" or "the work of 'Abd al-Malik the Christian," but both seem unlikely, in the latter case because 'Abd al-Malik would not be a normal name for a Christian.
- 20 Bautier, "Datation," 95.
- 21 In the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, inv. no. 50857: Manuel Gómez Moreno, *El arte árabe español hasta los*

- almohades: arte mozárabe*. Ars hispaniae: historia universal del arte hispánico 3 (Madrid: Plus Ultra, 1951), 335, fig. 393b.
- 22 Bautier expands on the question of the name Solomon being used in medieval Spanish documents to refer to wonderful and precious metal objects made in Spain or more generally “oriental”: Bautier, “Datation,” 96-98. Grabar, “About a Bronze Bird,” 2002, 122 lists all the possible readings of the inscriptions, and opts for “A work of Solomon [beauty], year 962, made by Abd al-Malik the Christian”.
- 23 Cagliari, Pinacoteca Nazionale, inv. no. 1445. Contadini, “Acquamanile in forma di uccello”; also see the contribution by Damiano Anedda in this volume, Chapter 4.1.
- 24 Sophie Makariou, “Aquamanile en forme de paon,” in *Les Andalousies de Damas à Cordoue*, exh. cat., Paris, Institut du Monde Arabe, ed. Marthe Bernus-Taylor and Éric Delpont (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 2000), 111, cat. 87.
- 25 Inv. no. 5/1990, Andalusia, datable to the eleventh - early twelfth century. See Sophie Makariou, “Aiguière,” in Bernus-Taylor and Delpont, *Les Andalousies*, 151, cat. 168; Kjeld von Folsach, *Art from the World of Islam in the David Collection* (Copenhagen: The David Collection, 2001), no. 457. This acquamanile has roundels on its body with incised images of lions, the heads of which, with their short noses remind me of the lions incised on the shield-like shapes on the Pisa Griffin.
- 26 Anna Contadini, “Acquamanile in forma di Uccello,” in Curatola, *Eredità dell’Islam*, 125, cat. 42.
- 27 Vaduz, Furusiyya Art Foundation. See Sophie Makariou, “Aquamanile en forme de paon,” in Bernus-Taylor and Delpont, *Les Andalousies*, 113, cat. 88; Sophie Makariou, “Aguamanil en forma de pavón,” in *El esplendor de los omeyas cordobeses: La civilización musulmana de Europa occidental. Catálogo de piezas*, ed. Rafael López Guzmán and Antonio Vallejo Triano (Granada: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura a través de la Fundación El Legado Andalusi, 2001), 47-48.
- 28 Likewise, also, with the Furusiyya peacock and the Khalili goose.
- 29 Contadini, “Acquamanile.” The casket is in Gerona’s Cathedral, inv. no. 64. Manuel Casamar, “Casket of Hisham II,” in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, exh. cat., ed. Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Madrid: Viso, 1992), 208-209, cat. 9.
- 30 Umayyad bone carving, in Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. 10411, datable to the eighth century. See Marthe Bernus-Taylor, “Plaque aux rinceaux de pampers habités,” in Bernus-Taylor and Delpont, *Les Andalousies*, 32, cat. 14; Fatimid five-petalled palmette from rock crystals, such as the reliquary of the nails of St Clare, Fatimid, tenth century. Assisi, Chiesa di Santa Chiara, for which see Contadini, “Transformation and Translocation,” 43, Pl. 1.1 and Fig. 1.1; Fatimid woodwork, as in the carved relief wooden panel, Fatimid Egypt, eleventh century. Kuwait, Dār al-Āthār al-Islāmiyya, LNS 55 W, for which see “Pannello in legno intagliato,” in *Arte islamica e mecenatismo: Tesori dal Kuwait*, ed. Esin Atıl (New York: Rizzoli International, 1990), 160-161, no. 46. And finally stylized five-petalled leaves among raceme in Spanish lustre painted ceramics and metalwork, such as the twelfth century Andalusian bowls in Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, inv. 1884.862, and in Pisa (from the church of San Silvestro), Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, inv. 190, for which see Gisela Helmecke and Claire Déléry, “Plat,” and Bulle Tuil Leonetti and Claire Déléry, “Plat,” in *Le Maroc médiéval. Un empire de l’Afrique à l’Espagne*, eds. Yannick Lintz, Claire Déléry and Bulle Tuil Leonetti (Paris: Hazan, Musée du Louvre, 2014), 418, cat. 254 and 420, cat. 256 respectively; and for metalwork see the casket in Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 51051.
- 31 Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. OA7883. See Claire Déléry, “Monzón Lion,” in *Islamic Art at the Musée du Louvre*, ed. Sophie Makariou (Paris: Hazan, 2012), 184-186 and Déléry, Chapter 4.3 in this volume.
- 32 Certainly not a feline. Not a hare as the tail is too long. For the image of dogs see *Kitāb manāfi’ al-hayawān* in the Escorial Library (see footnote 1 above), fol. 50v and reproduction in Carmen Ruiz Bravo-Villasante, *Libro de las Utilidades de los Animales* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1980), Pl. 12. For jackals in *Kalīla wa Dimna* manuscripts see Anna Contadini, “Ayyubid Illustrated Manuscripts and Their North Jaziran and ‘Abbasid Neighbours,” in *Ayyubid Jerusalem. The Holy City in Context 1187-1250*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand and Sylvia Auld, London: Altajir Trust, 2009, col. pl. XXVII and Pl. 9.5.
- 33 The Falcon has one front toe missing, the Sinai falcon one back toe.
- 34 Anedda and Pala, “Acquamanili,” fig. 8 for the London, V&A, twelfth century German acquamanile in the shape of a dragon with inlet from the upright tail.
- 35 Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, “Arte a Lucca. Spicilegio,” *Critica d’arte* 7 (1960): 64; Gabrieli and Scerrato, *Gli Arabi*, 491, no. 530; also discussion in Almut von Gladiss, “Räuchergerät in Vogelform” in *Europa und der Orient 800-1900*, ed. Gereon Sievernich and Hendrik Budde (Berlin: Berliner Festspiele, Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1989), 590-591, no. 4/79; Clara Baracchini and Antonino Caleca, “Presenze islamiche nell’arte a Pisa,” in *Arte Islamica: Presenza di cultura islamica nella Toscana costiera*, exh. cat., ed. Mariagiulia Buresi and Antonino Caleca (Pontedera: Bandecchi e Vivaldi, 1995), 60-61 and fig. on 25.
- 36 Rachel Ward, “Acquamanile a forma di falco,” in *Lucca e l’Europa. Un’idea di medioevo (V-XI secolo)*, exh. cat. Lucca, 25 September 2010 - 9 January 2011, ed. C. Baracchini et al. (Lucca: Fondazione Ragghianti Studi sull’arte, 2010), 199-201, no. 91.
- 37 Silva, *La Basilica*, 224.
- 38 Anna Contadini, “Acquamanile.”
- 39 Silva, *La Basilica*, 224-225; Del Grosso, “Rivestimento.”
- 40 *Kitāb na’t al-hayawān*, Baghdad, datable to 1225. London, British Library, Or. 2784, fols. 29v-32r; also *Kitāb manāfi’ al-hayawān*, Damascus, dated AH 755/1354 AD. Escorial, Biblioteca Real, Ms. 893, folio 95v. For the *Na’t* manuscript see Anna Contadini, *A World of Beasts: A Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Arabic Book on Animals (the Kitāb Na’t al-Hayawān) in the Ibn Bakhtīshū’ Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), cat. 53; for the Escorial *Manāfi’* see Anna Contadini, “The *Kitāb manāfi’ al-hayawān* in the Escorial Library,” *Islamic Art* III (1989): 33-57.
- 41 Now in the Treasury of the Vatican Basilica: see Silva, *La Basilica*, 225 and col. fig. 79.
- 42 Gaeta, Museo Diocesano, Exultet 1. Guglielmo Cavallo, Giulia Orofino, and Oronzo Pecere, eds, *Exultet. Rotoli liturgici del medioevo meridionale* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1994), 345.